



## THE STUDENTS' PROBLEMS IN SPEAKING AT MTs NURUSSA'ADAH TELUK RENDAH TEBO ILIR

Anil Fajri\*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Anilfajri@gmail.com

\*<sup>1</sup>MTs Nurussa'adah

### ABSTRACT

This research focused on describing students' speaking problems, employing the descriptive qualitative method as its research approach. The study utilized a case study design conducted at MTs Nurussa'adah Teluk Rendah Tebo Ilir, examining a specific phenomenon related to students' difficulties in speaking English. Purposive sampling was used to select eighth-grade students as participants. Data were collected through observations and interviews to gather insights directly from the participants. Initial observations and teacher evaluations indicated that students at MTs Nurussa'adah faced challenges in expressing themselves in English, often resorting to their native language. Interviews further revealed various issues, including linguistic factors such as pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary, as well as non-linguistic factors like motivation and the lack of English-speaking environments among peers.

*Keywords:* Problem, Problem in speaking, Speaking English

### A. INTRODUCTION

Listening, reading, writing, and speaking are integral skills in English language teaching and learning, each interconnected and essential for effective communication. Speaking, specifically, is a fundamental means of articulating thoughts, opinions, and ideas verbally. According to Tarigan (2008), speaking involves more than mere pronunciation; it encompasses the ability to express organized and developed thoughts effectively.

In countries where English is not the official language, many students encounter challenges in speaking English fluently and confidently. Longman Dictionary (2009) defines a problem as an obstacle or difficulty. Thus, a speaking problem refers to the challenges students face when expressing themselves orally in English. Zhang (2009) highlights that many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students struggle to master speaking skills and face barriers in oral communication. Al Hosni (2014) identifies lack of motivation as a significant reason for students' difficulties in speaking English, a sentiment echoed by Tok's (2009) study on Turkish EFL students, which identified unwillingness and anxiety as prevalent issues hindering speaking proficiency. Additionally, environmental factors, such as noisy



classrooms and social pressures, can further impede students' oral communication abilities (Jdetawy, 2011).

A preliminary investigation at MTs Nurussa'adah Teluk Rendah Tebo Ilir revealed that a majority of students scored below expectations in speaking assessments, with only 25% achieving passing grades. This indicates a widespread issue among students at MTs Nurussa'adah in effectively communicating in English orally. Many students tend to revert to Indonesian during English lessons, rather than using English as the primary medium of communication, which ideally should be the case in English language classrooms.

MTs Nurussa'adah Teluk Rendah Tebo Ilir was chosen for this study due to its rural location, where challenges such as limited educational resources, insufficient teaching staff, and curriculum constraints as noted by Pham (2021) are prevalent. These factors sparked the researcher's interest in understanding the specific speaking challenges faced by students at this school and how they cope with these challenges.

The study focused on eighth-grade students because they had already undergone a year of speaking practice in seventh grade, providing a foundation for understanding their current speaking abilities. Initial interviews conducted during preliminary observations revealed that eighth-grade students at MTs Nurussa'adah Teluk Rendah Tebo Ilir encountered similar speaking challenges observed in other educational contexts.

Thus, the researcher embarked on investigating "Students' Problem in Speaking at the Eighth Grade Student at MTs Nurussa'adah Teluk Rendah Tebo Ilir" to shed light on these issues. The findings of this study aim to contribute valuable insights into improving English language learning practices not only for students at MTs Nurussa'adah Teluk Rendah Tebo Ilir but also for English language learners more broadly. By addressing these challenges, educators and policymakers can enhance teaching strategies and support mechanisms to facilitate better speaking skills among students.

## **B. METHOD**



In this study, the researcher employed the descriptive qualitative research methodology. To explore the challenges faced by students in speaking, the researcher adopted a case study approach, involving data collection, analysis, and conclusion drawing. The case study design was chosen to delve into specific phenomena related to students' speaking difficulties at MTs Nurussa'adah Teluk Rendah Tebo Ilir. The descriptive research method was utilized to comprehensively describe various aspects of students' speaking problems encountered in this context. The researcher chose thirteen participants to conduct this research to ensure that the obtained data was valid

In this research, the researcher used semi-structured interview to collect the data from the participants and through interaction between the interviewer and the participants in conducting the interview. In this study, qualitative data analysis followed the framework proposed by Miles and Huberman (1992) as cited in Afrizal (2019). The data analysis process proceeded as follows: Following data collection through interviews, the researcher selected, focused on, and transcribed the notes containing relevant information. The researcher translated the interview results into English and eliminated unnecessary data to concentrate on important insights. Once the data were reduced, the researcher presented them as concise descriptions. The data presentation aimed to highlight the specific speaking problems faced by eighth-grade students at MTS Nurussa'adah. This presentation of data structured the information and provided fundamental descriptions of the findings. The final step involved drawing conclusions based on a comprehensive understanding of the collected data. The conclusions of the study constituted a detailed description of the students' challenges in speaking English. Prior to finalizing the conclusions, the researcher ensured the validity of interpretations by reviewing the processes of data reduction and presentation to mitigate any potential errors.

## **C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Speaking Problems Face by Students in MTs Nurussa'adah Teluk Rendah Tebo Ilir**

Based on the research findings, the researcher categorized the difficulties encountered by students at MTs Nurussa'adah Teluk Rendah Tebo Ilir in speaking English into two main



categories. The first category pertains to linguistic issues, which encompass vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar challenges. The second category comprises non-linguistic obstacles, which include factors related to students themselves, teachers, and the lack of English-speaking environments among peers. Based on interview, the researcher found that the participant hard to remember new and complex vocabulary.

*“Hard to remember the complex vocabularies” (Student 4) “Hard to remember the new vocabulary” (Student 3)*

*This problem makes the participants hard to speak English fluently. They said; “Because I first prepare the vocabulary that I will use, it makes me unable to speak fluently” (Student 10)*

*“Sometimes hesitant to choose the vocabulary to use” (Student 3).*

*The researcher also asked about problem that the students face in pronunciation. The researcher found that most students had poor pronunciation and they rarely practiced their pronunciation.*

*“English is hard to pronounce. (I’m) not frequent (to practice)” (student 2)*

*“Pronunciation is difficult to master, bro, and I rarely practice at home” (student 7)*

*“I think (pronunciation) is a bit difficult to master. I don’t practice frequently” (student 8)*

Here all of the students agree that grammar is important to learn English but most of them didn’t like grammar. All of them have problem in grammar, especially tenses. It shows when the researcher asks “Did you have any problem with grammar mastery in speaking? Which part of grammar?” and the student answer.

*“Most of the grammar is difficult to master, especially tense” (Student10).*

According to Student 8 and 10, this problem happened because grammar has many rules to learn

*“Because its preparation has many rules which are sometimes confusing” (Student 8) and “There are lots of rules to pay attention to” (Student 10).*



The researcher identified several non-linguistic issues through interviews. These issues stem from both students themselves and their environment: Upon observation, it was noted that some students were not actively participating in class; they struggled to express their thoughts and remained silent when their peers presented tasks. According to interviews, these problems originate from the students themselves, particularly due to their fear of making mistakes when speaking English. The environmental issue identified is the lack of supportive surroundings for practicing English among the participants' living environment.

Based on the aforementioned data, the researcher conducted an analysis of the challenges encountered by students at MTs Nurussa'adah Teluk Rendah Tebo Ilir using Horwitz's theory, which categorizes speaking problems into two main types: linguistic and non-linguistic issues:

Vocabulary is crucial in language acquisition, as it constitutes the foundational elements of spoken language development. However, many students feel they struggle with mastering vocabulary, citing difficulties in remembering complex words and phrases. They express challenges in recalling new vocabulary and how it impacts their fluency when speaking English. Pronunciation poses a significant challenge for students, particularly in distinguishing between similar sounding vowels and consonants. They note difficulties in pronouncing certain words correctly due to variations in sound placement and letter combinations, which affect their oral communication clarity. Grammar plays a vital role in language proficiency by governing the structure and rules of sentence formation. Students find grammar intricate and challenging, especially when dealing with tense formations and rule complexities. They acknowledge the importance of grammar knowledge in language learning and its impact on their language competence.

Student-related factors encompass various aspects such as age, motivation, self-esteem, and fear of making mistakes. Many students express embarrassment and fear of ridicule from peers when speaking English, which contributes to anxiety and reluctance to practice speaking skills. Lack of motivation also hinders their willingness to engage in English conversations. Environmental factors external to the students themselves significantly impact



their ability to practice and improve English speaking skills. The lack of supportive English-speaking environments at home or in their surroundings limits their exposure to spoken English. This lack of practice and exposure impedes their progress in developing fluency and confidence in speaking English.

In conclusion, these identified problems highlight the multifaceted challenges faced by students at MTs Nurussa'adah Teluk Rendah Tebo Ilir in learning and using English speaking skills. The linguistic issues encompass vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar complexities, while non-linguistic factors include student-related anxieties and environmental limitations. Addressing these challenges requires targeted strategies to enhance vocabulary retention, improve pronunciation accuracy, master grammar rules, boost student motivation, and create supportive English-speaking environments.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

Speaking serves as a tool for effectively articulating and developing opinions, especially given that English is not the official language in our country. Consequently, many students encounter challenges in speaking English. Based on initial observations and teacher-assigned scores, it was found that only 6 out of 24 students achieved scores above 75 (the minimum passing mark at MTs Nurussa'adah), indicating that less than half of the students passed the speaking assessments in their classes. This highlights the difficulties MTs Nurussa'adah students face in English speaking. Observations reveal that students struggle to express their thoughts in English and often resort to their native language. Interviews further revealed numerous issues, encompassing linguistic factors such as pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary, as well as non-linguistic factors including student-related challenges, motivation, and environmental influences.

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